

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Owners of charter headboat (CHB) vessels **must report** landings (*i.e.*, fish kept) of the following species to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) within 24 hours of landing at the dock:

- **Blue Marlin**
- **White Marlin**
- **Sailfish**
- **Swordfish**
- **Bluefin Tuna**

Landings of **bluefin tuna** must be reported to NMFS by calling **1-888-872-8862** or by logging onto www.nmfspermits.com.

Landings of **billfish** and **swordfish** must be reported to NMFS by calling toll-free **1-800-894-5528**. During the call, the vessel owner will be asked to provide their name, contact phone number, HMS permit number, species caught, and size of fish. NMFS will return the call and provide a confirmation number for the reported landing.

In Maryland and North Carolina vessel owners should report their HMS landings at state-operated reporting stations. For reporting information in **Maryland**, contact **(410) 213-1531**. In **North Carolina**, contact **(800) 338-7804**. Vessel permit holders do not need to report billfish and swordfish that are landed in registered tournaments to the NMFS toll-free reporting line if tournament operators report tournament landings. Vessel permit holders are responsible for reporting tournament related landings, if tournament operators do not fulfill tournament reporting requirements.

In addition, CHB operators must complete a logbook and submit cost-earnings information to NMFS, if selected.

SALE OF FISH

CHB vessels that also possess commercial limited access HMS permits are subject to recreational catch limits when engaged in for-hire fishing. Vessel owners may sell tunas (except for bluefin tuna caught under the recreation angling category regulations, *i.e.* bluefin between 27" and 73" CFL or trophy fish greater than 73"). Sharks and swordfish may only be sold if commercial shark and swordfish handgear permits have also been issued to the vessel.

AUTHORIZED GEARS

Species	Authorized Gears
Billfishes	Rod & Reel
Swordfish	Rod & Reel; Handline*
Sharks	Rod & Reel; Handline*
Tunas	Rod & Reel; Handline*; Bandit Gear

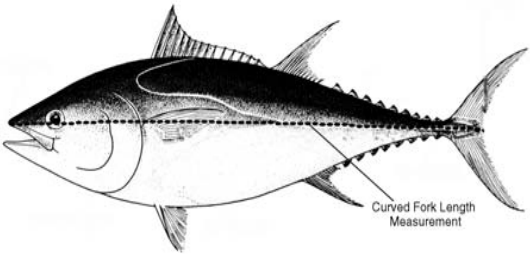
* A handline is defined as: a mainline to which no more than two gangions or hooks are attached. A handline is retrieved by hand, not by mechanical means. A mainline with 3 or more hooks is considered a longline.

SIZE AND RETENTION LIMITS

HMS retention limits vary by trip type (for-hire or non-for-hire).

Limits for for-hire HMS CHB trips			
Species		Minimum Size*	Retention Limits
Blue Marlin		99" (LJFL)	N/A
White Marlin		66" (LJFL)	N/A
Sailfish		63" (LJFL)	N/A
Longbill Spearfish		Prohibited	0
Swordfish		47" (LJFL) or, 29" (CK) or, 33 lbs dw	1/person up to 3/vessel per trip
Bigeye Tuna		27" (CFL)	N/A
Albacore Tuna		N/A	N/A
Yellowfin Tuna		27" (CFL)	3/person per day
Skipjack Tuna		N/A	N/A
Bluefin Tuna	Ang. Cat.	27" - <73" CFL	Vary in season
	Gen. Cat.	>73" CFL	Vary in season
Sharks (excluding prohibited species)		54" FL**	1/vessel per trip**

*Applies to billfish from the management unit (Atlantic Ocean) regardless of where caught; Atlantic swordfish in federal and international waters; Atlantic tunas in federal, international, and state waters (see 50 C.F.R. 635.1 for specific states); and Atlantic sharks in federal waters. Additional state regulations may also apply.
**With an allowance for one bonnethead and one Atlantic sharpnose shark per person per trip with no minimum size.



Curved Fork Length (CFL)



Cleithrum to Caudal Keel (CK)



Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL)



Fork Length (FL)

THE HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES CHARTER/HEADBOAT VESSEL PERMIT

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) requires vessel permits for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) (tunas, billfish, swordfish, and sharks) to monitor fishing effort, gain an understanding about fishery participants, distribute regulatory and other information, and collect data for management decisions. NMFS issues permits for the HMS Charter/headboat (CHB) fishery and manages the fleet as a unique sector due to its unique mix of commercial and recreational operations.

WHEN DO I NEED A HMS CHARTER/HEADBOAT PERMIT?

Owners of vessels that carry passengers for-hire and fish for, possess, or retain Atlantic HMS must obtain an annual HMS CHB permit. NMFS defines a “for-hire” trip as a trip carrying a fee-paying passenger; or having more than three persons for a vessel licensed to carry six or fewer; or having more persons aboard than the number of crew specified on the vessel’s Certificate of Inspection for U.S. Coast Guard inspected vessels. The number of persons aboard includes the operator and crew and the retention limits would also apply to the operator and crew. While fishing for, or possessing, Atlantic HMS, the vessel operator must have a valid Merchant Marine License or Uninspected Passenger Vessel License. Because size and retention limits apply to Atlantic billfish harvested from the management unit regardless of where caught, charter/headboat vessels that catch, retain, possess, or land billfish should have an HMS Charter/Headboat permit.

WHERE DO I GET A PERMIT?

Atlantic HMS CHB permits are available by calling **1-888-872-8862** or by logging onto www.nmfspermits.com.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q 1. May swordfish and sharks caught under a CHB category permit be sold?

A 1. No. However, commercial swordfish hangear and shark limited access permits may be combined with a CHB category permit to allow sale of these species.

Q 2. May BAYS tunas caught under a CHB category permit be sold?

A 2. Yes, on for-hire trips, CHB permit holders may sell up to the recreational limits of BAYS tunas, however no recreationally caught bluefin tuna may be sold. On non-for-hire trips, there are no limits on the number of BAYS tunas that may be retained and sold.

Q 3. May billfishes (blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish, and spearfish) be retained for sale with a CHB category permit?

A 3. No. The sale of all Atlantic billfish is prohibited regardless of permit type.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms
www.nmfspermits.com

Tuna Issues:

HMS Gloucester 978-281-9260

Shark, Swordfish, & Permitting Issues:

HMS Headquarters 301-713-2347

Recreational Swordfish & Billfish Issues:

HMS St. Petersburg 727-824-5399

***Shark & Swordfish Commercial Permit
Renewals & Transfers:*** Southeast Regional
Permit Office
727-824-5326
***Atlantic Tuna, HMS Angling, and HMS
CHB Category Permits:*** NMFS Permit Shop
888-872-8862

National Marine Fisheries Service
Highly Migratory Species Management Div.
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Charter/Headboat Vessel Permit & Reporting Requirements



National Marine Fisheries Service

Office of Sustainable Fisheries
Highly Migratory Species Management
Division

This pamphlet provides a summary of HMS charter/headboat permit regulations as of February 2005. For the complete and official set of regulations, see 50 CFR part 635 and the Federal Register or call the Highly Migratory Species Management Division at 301-713-2347. If there is a discrepancy between the regulations in 50 CFR part 635 and this brochure, the regulations will take precedence. This brochure is produced in compliance with Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act.

